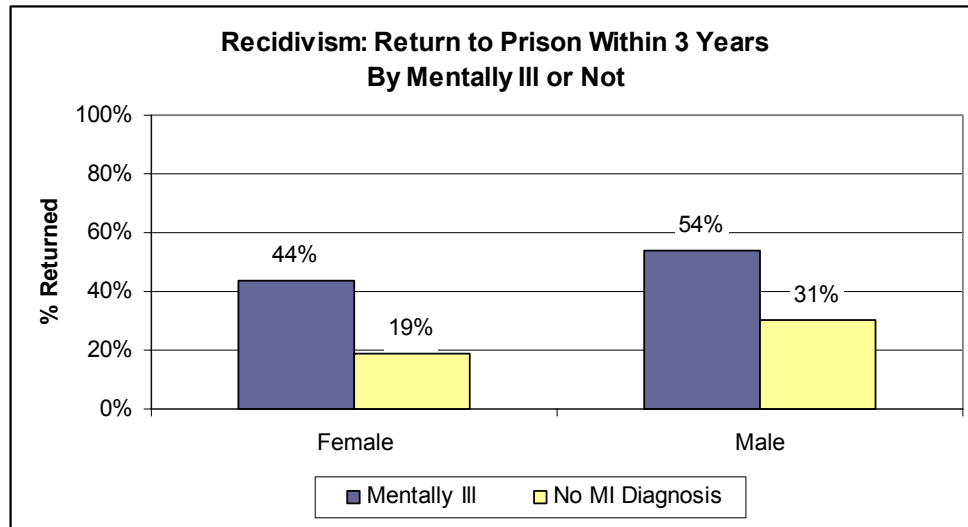




Mental Health Issues and Recidivism

There is reason to be concerned about mental health treatment as a way to reduce offender recidivism. Data compiled by the Iowa Department of Corrections shows mentally ill offenders have substantially higher recidivism rates than offenders who are not mentally ill.



(Chart depicts three-year recidivism rates for offenders released in FY2003)
Sources: Iowa Corrections Information System (ICON) and ICON-Medical Module

The Department has made steps toward measuring treatment success for offenders, which includes analysis of recidivism reduction effects. The first of these studies, completed last year, evaluated the extent to which substance abuse treatment for offenders reduces recidivism. Obviously mental health treatment is another area for study, given the high recidivism rate for this group.

In the meantime, the substance abuse treatment study documented the effectiveness of the 1st district's dual diagnosis program, which treats offenders with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health issues. The program has a substantial risk reduction effect on offenders who successfully complete the program.

